

# Talking to your legislator about civil legal aid funding

## Talking to Your Legislator

- Introduce yourself as a constituent and an attorney.
- State that civil legal aid is important to you and thank your legislator for his or her past support.
- Tell your legislator that civil legal aid is in crisis and strongly urge him or her to request \$26 million in funding for the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC) in FY20.
- Ask your legislator to make this funding request one of his or her top three budget priorities.

## Supporting Facts & Information

- Without civil legal aid, low-income individuals and families that face serious civil legal problems related to housing, health care, immigration, domestic violence and other issues must navigate the court system alone.
- Changes in federal policy and cuts to anti-poverty programs have greatly increased the civil legal needs of low-income people and the elderly, making civil legal aid more important than ever for our state's most vulnerable residents.
- Civil legal aid programs, facing persistent funding shortages and increasing demand for services, are forced to turn away 65% of eligible residents who seek help.
- Civil legal aid is a responsible investment, saving the state money on shelter and emergency costs and returning money to residents through federal benefits.
- Ensuring access to legal advice and representation for all people, not just those who can afford it, is a pillar of Massachusetts' long-standing dedication to equality and justice.



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